

# A FIRST YEAR IN THE UNITED STATES SENATE

By HON. DUNCAN U. FLETCHER.

Florida's Junior United States Senator, who has just finished his first year in that body.

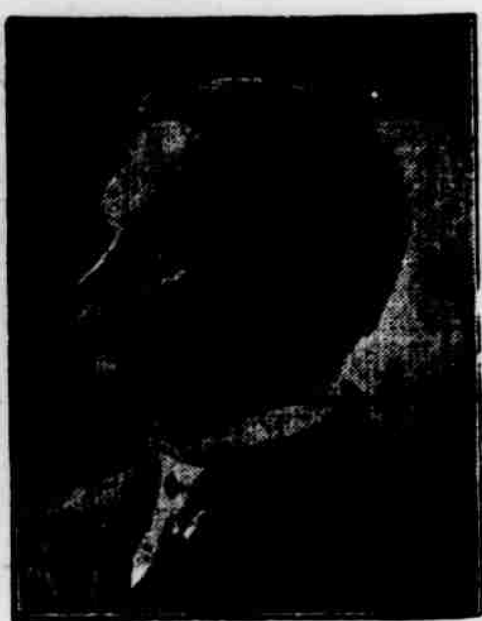
The new Senator's commission is usually presented by his colleague, referred to the Committee on Privileges and Elections and by it reported to the Senate.

If the commission is regular and the report favorable he is escorted to the Vice-President's desk by his colleague and takes the oath and signs the roll. Only a few states, like Georgia and Florida, do not elect their senators until after the 4th of March, when the terms expire. It is somewhat irregular to begin a term by appointment from the Governor and the committee has signified its reluctance to recognize such appointment and the states have been urged to change the times of meeting of the legislatures in order that an election may be had before March 4th.

When one has been nominated in a primary and is appointed until the legislature meets there is less disposition to hesitate about recognizing the appointment because of the certainty that when the legislature does meet that person will be duly elected. In such case he is sworn in under the appointment and serves until the legislature elects and his regular commission comes. Then that is presented and he again takes the oath and signs the roll. When the new Senator's credentials are approved and he is ready to take the oath, he is admitted to the floor and, usually, the senior Senator extends every courtesy, introducing him to the Vice-President and his colleagues on both sides of the Chamber and generally making the way for a kindly welcome.

How He Selects His Seat.  
He takes the seat assigned him, which is not chosen by lot or drawing, but is the one left unselected at the time. When a seat is vacated for any reason, if it is desirable, it is "filled on," that is, the Sergeant at Arms is notified by the one or more desiring it, to that effect, and he must allow the first notice to take the seat. It is a case of "first come, first served." For instance, Senator Raynor was the first to file on Senator Clay's seat which was a very desirable one. He takes it.

When the new Senator takes his seat, he surveys the field. He studies first the men he has read and heard about. Then he takes his Directory out of his desk and looks up and locates all the members. He watches carefully all the proceedings. He observes there is no roll call until some Senator suggests the absence of a quorum and this can be done at any time, even while a Senator is speaking. This accounts in a measure for the usual small attendance when the Senate is called to order. By the time "morning business" is reached the attendance is larger. He next observes the reporters and that everything said and



SENATOR DUNCAN U. FLETCHER

done is taken down precisely and goes into the printed Record and nothing goes in but what actually occurred. No speech, for instance, is delivered in the Senate but what is printed as delivered (unless it be in Executive Session) and no speech not actually delivered is printed in the Senate Record. The new Senator must familiarize himself with the Rules. In the meantime he selects his offices in the Senate office building (from the number not occupied) and sees the chairman of the caucus, known as the leader in his party, and secures the best committee assignments he can get.

Not Expected to Talk.  
The dominant party will be found to have all the important chairmanships and a large majority on every committee. He is not expected to take part in debate or to do much else but learn. If he is wise, he will acquiesce in this usage. He finds there is much to learn, sufficient to occupy his time, and that, in fact, there is a tremendous amount of work to do, without reference to preparation for participation in discussion on the floor. His committees get to work and he will soon find various questions to investigate and subjects to consider of national importance and no objection by others to his going into them fully. His first impression on looking in on Congress, visiting the Departments, the public buildings and getting a glimpse of what it all means, is that this is truly a great and growing country, that vast interests are in the care of the government, the happiness and welfare of ninety million people are at stake; that responsibilities almost overwhelming rest up-

on conscientious officials from the chief executive down.

His correspondence occupies much of his time. Matters in his state command his first attention and necessitate frequent visits to the Department. Very soon he will have to call on the President and every cabinet officer in respect to some public business arising from time to time in his own State. This includes sending out thousands of bulletins, documents, packages of seed and reports, attending to postoffice and postal route matters, public buildings, river and harbor improvements, pensions, forest reservation affairs, fisheries, soil and topographical surveys and numerous other things of a local nature. His duties increase. His committees begin to report and he may be under the obligation of sustaining or objecting to the report in open debate on the floor. This disturbs him, but he must not shrink from his duty. He begins to feel his responsibility keenly. He finds himself a part, comparatively small though it may be, of this wonderful governmental machinery, attached to the legislative branch but identified more or less with the whole. A government which requires a thousand million dollars a year to run is no small affair.

Consider that the welfare of all the people and the prosperity of the whole country are vitally affected by what goes on in Washington, in large measure in Congress, and you will agree no man can estimate lightly his duties, view with indifference his relations or steer inconsiderately his course. His colleagues will get his measure very soon. His services will be in demand when they are satisfied of his capabilities and efficiency and his opportunities for usefulness will become limited only by his abilities. He need not hurry. Better not attempt to forge into the lime light. If you are lacking in judgment it would be a mistake to give an exhibition of it and hence the new Senator should and must "make haste slowly."

The Senate a Great School.  
The fact is the Senate is a great school. One in which you learn as long as your mind is active. The best senator, I think, is the one who experiences continuous growth and development. When he gets too old to learn he ought to retire. Until that point is reached he improves and grows in knowledge and, what is perhaps more important, in usefulness to his country at large as well as to his State.

Not a Rich Man's Club.  
The new Senator towards the close of his first year will have just about found himself, realized the responsibilities of his position and his relation to the government, and entered in earnest upon his duties. He cannot escape the feeling by that

time that the impression existing in some quarters that the Senate is a sort of rich man's club, composed largely of idling, scheming men who are high livers, with plenty of leisure, making use of the Government for the benefit of special interests at the expense of the people, is altogether unjust and erroneous. He has seen these men toil night and day. He has witnessed their struggle with governmental problems, actuated by a sincere, impelling desire to solve them in the interest of the whole people and in a way to strengthen the nation. He has observed that the United States Senate is the most democratic body under any government. Uniform courtesy and equality of rights prevail. Debate is practically unlimited. Cool, deliberate, but earnest, sincere and patriotic in method and impulse, while no clamor or spasm disturbs it, the Senate is in close touch with matured public sentiment, and the solemn voice of the people reaches open ears and responsive hearts there.

To be sure there will creep in selfish purposes and unholy alliances, now and then, but that is the exception. There will be a divergence of views as to what makes for the public good rather than private gain. I do not mean to say the members are all perfect and that all the ends aimed at are always the highest. Generally, the latter statement is true. The above sketches in outline what is likely to be the experiences, observations and impressions of the new Senator during the first year.

Buying for Christmas.  
You are going to spend from five hundred to a thousand dollars in buying Christmas presents this year. Get at it at once. Don't wait for the jam.

Remember the salesmen and the salesgirls. At this season their work doubles. They can no longer attend social functions and take auto rides. Not one of them can get half a day off to go to a wedding. Others can take straw rides and go to barn dances, but such things are not for them. They must stand behind the counters and charge you 20 per cent more than the same goods will sell for two weeks hence.

Don't make their lot harder by offering them \$200 for a \$350 diamond pin.

Don't take up their time for half an hour now, then say you will call around next year.

Don't look over all the \$8 umbrellas and then sneeringly observe that you have seen better for half the price. Don't say to the young lady who has so kindly given you 40 minutes of her valuable time in selecting furs for your wife that you are going downstairs and buy a toy mule for your son.

## The Deacons's Christmas Eve

BY GERALD PRIME

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This very night they're coming home.  
Their faces will appear  
Once more around the Yuletide feast,  
Our sons and daughters dear.  
Then there'll be all the babies, too,  
To jolt upon my knee  
And make our big, old fashioned house  
A scene of revelry.

The hemlock wreaths hang on the wall.  
That spray of mistletoe  
Recalls, old dear, our sparkling days,  
Some fifty years ago.  
When first I kissed you underneath  
The bough of fateful pearls.  
I seem to see you once again,  
The sweetest of all girls.

The pantry shelves are loaded down  
With every kind of cake  
And pies of mince and pumpkin such  
As only you can make.  
Beyond the close shut parlor door  
An angel bright and fair  
Is looking down upon a tree  
That stands all ready there.

Put up your knitting, mother, dear.  
The tinkle of the bells  
Across the snow clad upper road  
In welcome warning swells.  
For here are Dick and Jack and Jess  
And Molly, Tom and Sue  
And all the merry, dimpled, cute,  
Mischievous youngsters too!

Don't ask the girl at the jewelry counter counter if the diamonds are real. Don't look at a \$300 Paris gown for your wife and then drop down to a box of cigars for a dollar. Don't ask the salesmen to buy or stock, and don't mention to the sales girls that there's going to be a church festival and a sleigh ride.

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